

insufficiency, yet nevertheless, content to love Him thus ---- go on with simplicity and humility'. The way ahead may still be difficult but instead of us trying to carry God, we rest in Jesus carrying us.

Lord, You have always given
Peace for the coming day,
And though of anxious heart,
Today I believe.

Lord, You have always marked
The Road for the coming day.
And though it may be hidden,
Today, I believe.

Celtic Daily Prayer, Northumbria Community

A blessed Advent and Christmas,

Sisters of Jesus Way.



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Sisters of Jesus Way

Advent 17

Our dear friends,
Much has happened here since our last newsletter. Summer, in all her loveliness passed too soon. It was followed by our harvest. The freezers were filled for the winter. This year, we brought hymns, songs, readings from the Bible and poetry together in a service, where we celebrated the Heavenly Father's goodness and thanked him for the produce from our land. Now, the garden is looking forlorn, except for a few valiant nasturtiums, a scattering of roses, delicate cosmos, sweet grapes defying the wind and rain and the last few tomatoes in the greenhouse.



Two of our ponds have been emptied and seem like huge, cavernous holes in what was once a beautiful part of our garden. The fish have been transported to new homes. We are very grateful for the help and expertise that was given us. We were quite perplexed how to begin such a difficult task especially, moving our now large, greedy carp.

We are having an extension to Bethany, our mother house; our ponds unfortunately were in the way. Our house is too small for nine Sisters, plus a dog and a cat. In addition, two Brothers are in and out during the day and at meal times. We are uncomfortably aware that we are at capacity and would not have a bedroom for the next Sister who comes along. So, there was really no choice. Once the heavy work is over, we anticipate making the far end of the garden as beautiful as it was before. The work will carry on through the winter and be completed towards the middle of next year. It will be seriously disruptive for us, but will not disturb Redacre, our guest house. The builders will be well away from there.

We hope that we will see many of you over the coming months. A word of warning: our New Year Celebration is full to capacity again this year. We are sorry that we have had to disappoint so many of you. Our Advent Weekend is also full. The following week, we have an Advent Day Retreat on the Saturday.

There are a few places on this and if anyone wishes to stay overnight they would be very welcome.

Although we often take Quiet Days for groups who come to us, we held our first Quiet Day for our guests this autumn. There may be some who cannot face a weekend of silence but could manage a day! We were made aware that there are some who find it impossible to be away overnight but who are able come for a day. A new venture for us will be a day on dance in worship which will be led by a Sister who was a professional ballet dancer. She has expressed a wish that there be no more than seven taking part. That will be a beautiful day and, as with all our days and retreats, we want Jesus to be honoured. Do look at the accompanying leaflet and contact us as soon as possible as some days and weekends are popular. There are many days that are not organised days, apart from our morning and evening prayers, so if you are worn out and have that, 'I must get away' feeling, then we are here to welcome you.

Since our last newsletter, our second book, 'Precious in His Sight', has been published. This book is the story of the Heavenly Father's care for the Sisters of Jesus Way. We started with two Sisters, and four Sisters constructed a self-build house with help, especially from the Lord. His providential love has watched over us throughout the years. All this we have tried to record faithfully. The comment that comes most frequently is, 'I couldn't put it down'. It is well illustrated with 40 photographs inserted into the text.

We are still occasionally asked, 'What do you do all day?' There is more to do here most days than we have time to do it and we are very grateful to friends that help us in practical ways. This, our last newsletter of the year, gives us an opportunity to thank you all. We would like also to express gratitude to the friends who have supported us financially. May we remind those of you who Gift Aid to let us know if you stop paying tax, or change address.

For many, life can be quite overwhelming – unexpected illness, suffering, destructive relationships, and loneliness, to mention but a few of the circumstances which we may have to face. Over the years, many of our guests have asked us for a chat and a prayer. We have listened to some heart-rending stories. Life is tough. Even Christmas, that most lovely of all Christian Festivals, can bring anxiety. There is the problem of money, extra work and, for some, difficult family relationships. We are not exempt from pressure at Redacre, especially the second, the extra work! However early we start on our Christmas preparations, it never seems to be quite early enough!

Some of us feel guilty when we find life a burden. 'This is not how Christians should be,' we think, so we strive to overcome while underneath we feel we are constantly failing. We are a long way from those glorious days when we first discovered Jesus. When some of us were young, we put on our best clothes when we went to church, and that included a hat and gloves! Spiritually, some of us try to do that now. We try to be our very best for God and put on our best spiritual clothing. It is quite an effort. It sounds so good but it trips us up. Our lives are littered with 'musts' and 'oughts': 'I must be more loving,' 'I should not have been irritated, I will try harder to be patient,' 'I ought to read my bible more,' or, 'be a better example,' or, 'make more time for prayer.' All of these may be true but we learn to our chagrin that it is not happening, however hard we try. Self-effort is never the road to God.

We have become confused as to what the gospel, or good news, is all about. It is not about achieving. That is the world, and perhaps unconsciously we have absorbed that attitude. Jesus loves failures. He loves those who are weak and those who have done great wrongs. It is spelt out in page after page of the Gospels. That is why he became so unpopular, because he was mixing with the likes of us! We can be ourselves. When we realise that, truly, truly realise it, then what a relief it is! Jesus loves us. It sounds so simple but many of us find that difficult to take on board. We can't change ourselves. Only the Lord can do that. It is his love that changes us. There are many moments in the day when we can let our thoughts turn gently and quietly to the love of God. It doesn't have to be a long prayer-time. Say to yourself, 'I am loved by God more than I can either conceive or understand.' (Abbe de Tourville, Letters of Direction.)

Jesus said, 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.' (Matt 11:28-30 NIV) When Jesus speaks about his 'light' yoke, it is simply another way of saying that security is in listening to his voice and being obedient. We learn to recognise that gentle voice and as St John writes, 'His commands are not burdensome,' (1 John 5:3b.NIV) 'Learn from me,' Jesus said, 'to be patient and gentle with everyone, but especially with yourself.' (Francis de Sales). Hudson Taylor said to his child, 'Give your heart to Jesus at the beginning of the day and he will take care of it for you'. It is good advice for us, also.

The small step we have to take is to believe what Jesus taught and to trust him like a small child. The Abbe de Tourville wrote in a letter, 'Love our Lord with simplicity; that is to say with the entire conviction of your own great unending

